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CMclD*

a vehicle system controller (VSC) for receiving a temperature signal from the engine temperature sensor and a state of charge signal from the battery state of charge indicator; and

an engine control unit operated by the VSC, with the engine control unit being directed to operate the engine in a fail-safe mode in the event that the engine temperature exceeds a predetermined temperature threshold, with said engine controller halting the engine and powering the vehicle solely with the traction motor if the battery state of charge is greater than a predetermined charge threshold, and with said engine controller operating the engine on alternating cylinders in the event that the engine temperature exceeds the predetermined temperature threshold and the battery state of charge is less than said predetermined charge threshold.

Please amend Claim 18 to read as follows:

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18. A method for operating an engine in a hybrid electric vehicle having both an internal combustion engine and a traction motor, with said method comprising the steps of:
 - measuring an operating temperature of the engine;
 - measuring a state of charge of an electric storage device connected to said traction motor; and
 - in the event that said operating temperature exceeds a predetermined temperature threshold and said state of charge is less than a predetermined charge threshold, operating the engine on alternating cylinders so as to lower the operating temperature of the engine, and in the further event that said operating temperature exceeds the predetermined temperature threshold and said state of charge is greater than the predetermined charge threshold, powering the vehicle solely with the traction motor.